


education professionals as well as members of the public with interest in these subjects and themes.

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ROBERT BURROUGHS. *Black Students in Imperial Britain: The African Institute, Colwyn Bay, 1889–1911*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022. Pp. 249. \$44.99 (paperback).
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When Welsh missionary William Hughes left the Congo in the 1880s owing to ill health, he was determined to continue his project to evangelize and uplift Africans. He brought two Congolese boys with him to Britain and set about fundraising to create a school in the Welsh town of Colwyn Bay to prepare Black students for life as missionaries. At first known as the Congo Training Institute, it was later renamed the African Institute and began recruiting students from British West Africa, the Cameroons, Liberia, and beyond. Hughes relentlessly publicized his work and narrated the lives of students in a perpetual quest for donations. He promised donors that funding students' education for a few years would have a big payoff: the students would go on to become financially self-sustaining missionaries. Owing to the combination of industrial and religious education received at the Institute, the future missionaries would be able to farm, make and repair things, and deliver inspiring sermons that filled the pews with members who would make weekly donations. All this would keep costs down and revenues up such that these mission stations would eventually be able to sponsor future students' education at the Institute. Ultimately, the African Institute only educated roughly ninety students, constantly struggled to secure enough funding, and had to close its doors amid reports of scandalous misconduct.

Though the history of the African Institute has been told before by historians, Robert Burroughs approaches it from a new angle with a particular focus on the students themselves. Burroughs seeks to underline their “roles as agents in the history of imperial humanitarianism, a topic routinely misread in terms of unliteral white actions” (6). The paucity of records written by students makes this a challenging task and Hughes ultimately looms large in the narrative, but Burroughs succeeds in bringing to life the way that Black students used the African Institute for their own ends and challenged much of the ideology that underpinned it. For instance, students soon came to use the school as a way to prepare for admission to British universities rather than as means of training for missionary careers. They also embraced a pan-Africanism and Ethiopianism that challenged the depictions of African societies as barbaric found in Hughes' 1892 *Dark Africa and the Way Out* and many of the publicity materials which he used to appeal to donors.

Yet Burroughs also takes pain to highlight the constraints which students faced. They had to act as “objects of sympathy ... in ways that conformed to demeaning stereotypes” held by donors to the school – and by the Hughes himself (25). Hughes paraded his first two pupils, Kinkasa and Nkanza, from church to church in the region and in front of photographers to demonstrate their “otherness” – if also their potential for civilization – to attract support for the school. Once operational, the African Institute adopted a curriculum that was designed to educate and uplift, yet also to inculcate humility and prepare students for lives of hardship. Having the students farm and apprentice with local townspeople to learn vocational skills alongside more academic subjects was part of Hughes' vision of limited uplift. Though many students pushed back against this curriculum and the

understanding of race from which it stemmed, the power of Hughes, the donors, and British society and culture more broadly meant that they could not entirely remake the African Institute. Leading up to the final closure of the Institute in 1911, students were increasingly seen as ingrates who squandered the opportunities so generously given to them by Hughes and donors. Their morality was also called into question when *John Bull* ran a story that a Black man affiliated with the school had seduced and fathered a child with a local woman. Hughes sued for libel, but the disastrous trial that followed exposed his mismanagement of the Institute's financial affairs and supposed tolerance for "students' disreputable tendencies" (180). This sealed the fate of an institution that was already in terminal decline.

There is much that is familiar in this story of tension between Black agency and cultural and structural constraints, a belief by White Britons in the potential for Blacks to eventually become full partners in the civilizing mission and a deep-seated racism that coexisted with that belief. However, two things about Burroughs' approach offer an original contribution to scholarship on imperial humanitarianism, missionary projects of uplift, and racism. The first is the location of the Institute: a seaside resort town in Wales into which the Institute was thoroughly integrated. As Burroughs discusses, the African students who studied there and some of the teachers noted the parallels between the politics of Welsh and African cultures at this moment. Both the Welsh and Africans had been castigated as backwards and in need of proper uplift from the English, starting with learning the English language itself. Yet by the turn of the twentieth century, there was also a growing pride in and defense of elements of Welsh and African identities, including in Welsh non-conformity and African Christianity. The second dimension of this history that makes it stand out is the Institute's connections to the German-occupied Cameroons and to the Belgian Congo. Indeed, Hughes even managed to secure King Leopold II as an official patron of the Institute. Both Hughes and students were forced to navigate the tensions that erupted as the brutalities in the Congo were exposed by British journalists and missionaries and amid the growing economic and military rivalry with Germany. These two topics each get discussed, but making them more central to the overarching argument of the book would have added to its originality. Nevertheless, on the whole Burroughs succeeds in offering a richly contextualized account of how a small but significant group of Black students participated in, yet challenged and reworked an institution which embodied many of the contradictions of imperial humanitarianism around the turn of the twentieth century.

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ROSALIND COFFEY. *The British Press, Public Opinion and the End of Empire in Africa: The Wind of Change, 1957–60*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. Pp. 291. \$119.99 (cloth).
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Decolonization and the end of the Empire in Africa have been extensively explored by historians mostly through the lenses of Cold War and Development. Since the late twentieth century, several historians have examined the roles of Africans in the politics of the end of the British Empire in Africa. Much of the existing literature focuses on the roles of African actors such as the nationalists, students, youth, women, nationalist movements, and labor unions in decolonization during the late twentieth century. Fredrick Cooper's classic, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (1996) is one among